

also continued to take a close interest in Iraq policy, helping through skillful manoeuvring to make a looming US-led confrontation with Baghdad over weapons inspections in February 1998 ultimately unsustainable.

Arguably the best evidence of weak civilian government and the shifting responsibilities for policymaking came between late 1997 and autumn 1998, especially with the emergence of the diplomacy of the military. By this stage the Chief of Staff, İsmail Hakkı Karadayı, was in any case the dominant actor in Turkish politics, having been the decisive figure in the fall of the Refahıyol government. In December 1997 Karadayı visited Cairo to signal the fact that the Turkish military was not ignoring the Arabs and there was still some balance in Turkish policy. In April 1998 Karadayı flew to Georgia and Azerbaijan to boost ties with both states, and attended a WEU meeting in Athens, which was used to explore the possibility of a thaw in bilateral relations with Greece. In May he made a five day trip to Moscow to address a raft of issues of concern to Turkey, from Russia's sale of S-300 missiles to Cyprus and its toleration of the political activities of the PKK on its soil to its assistance to Iran for the development of missiles and nuclear technology and the growing Greek-Russian military co-operation. When combined with the regular forays abroad of Karadayı's deputy, General Çevik Bir, who enjoyed a platform and took pleasure in trenchant comment, there was increasingly little doubt as to which institution Turkey's friends and adversaries alike were obliged to take most seriously.

Primary players

THE GOVERNMENT

Nominally, the government, as the political expression of the democratic will, has responsibility for policy, including foreign policy. Notionally at least, therefore, the foreign minister, as the principal minister responsible for foreign affairs, has responsibility for the day-to-day political oversight of foreign relations within the policy parameters laid down by the cabinet. And on occasion in Turkey, most recently under the guidance of Hikmet Çetin, that is how the system has actually functioned.

Often, perhaps more often than not, the system works differently. It firstly works differently in terms of the messiness of governance

in Turkey. The proliferation of cabinet positions, as a way of creating more senior patronage for party leaders when in office, has often meant that there is more than one figure responsible for any one area of foreign policy. Abdullah Gül and Sükrü Sina Gürel are but two examples of state ministers who have exercised considerable influence in foreign affairs even when not holding the portfolio.

Secondly, the system works differently because of the spasmodic emasculation of government. This has been the case where cabinet government has effectively broken down or been suspended for extended periods. This has proved to be a recurring characteristic of Turkish government with the fragmentation of political parties and the necessity since 1991 of coalition government. The growing incompatibility of leaders and parties within coalition governments from 1994 onwards has increased the temptation for party leaders to bypass the cabinet as the expression of the collective will of government in favour of government by cabals, cliques and committees. In the mid-1990s it almost became a pastime of political commentators to measure the time gap between successive meetings of the council of ministers, with a gap of 56 days being chalked up in 1994 under Çiller and well over two months during the last weeks of the Refahıyol government in 1997.

Thirdly, the system also works differently in terms of the democratic deficit in Turkey. It is not the case that the democratically-elected government lays down policy, the implementation of which is then managed by the foreign and other related ministers. In Turkey, the guidelines of grand strategy, of high politics belong not to the government of the day as an expression of the popular will, but to the high priests of Kemalism, as an expression of the ideals of Atatürk. These guardians of the sacred will consist first and foremost of the senior officer corps of the military, supplemented at a secondary level by parts of the bureaucracy, and the top diplomats in the case of the Foreign Ministry. In other words, as members of the bureaucratic elite are often proud to point out, in Turkey one has to distinguish between 'state policy' and 'government policy'.

THE PRESIDENCY

Though the detail of its form has often changed, Turkey has, since the beginning of the emergence of multi-party democracy in 1946,

always had a parliamentary as opposed to a presidential system. Under such a system, the prerogatives of the president are necessarily limited and contingent. However, in Turkey the president's role is more than merely titular. As Alan Makovsky has noted the power of the presidency 'increases proportionately to the weakness and passivity of the popularly elected government'.²⁷ Indeed, under the 1982 Constitution, drafted under the auspices of the military, a somewhat stronger presidency was created than had existed in the past.²⁸

In the field of foreign affairs, the constitution has little specific to say beyond the obvious. The president is responsible for the promulgation and ratification of treaties, and for the accreditation of Turkey's representatives abroad and for receiving in Ankara the representatives of foreign states. On paper, at least, the post has considerable powers of appointment and discretion, including the ability to appoint the chief of the general staff and to call and preside over the NSC. With personality and context being so central to politics in Turkey, it is as easy to remember an iconoclast like Özal asserting his authority over the military in a context of the re-civilianisation of politics as it is to witness the timidity of Demirel, a man fearful of being removed a third time from office by the armed forces, in a context, since February 1997, of de-democratisation and the re-assertion of the military in Turkish politics.

In reality, that has meant that the presidency has often been a marginal force in Turkey's foreign affairs. Even Özal cut a pitiful figure as president in 1992 and early 1993 as he sought a route back to the political hub. To compensate for relative idleness, President Özal took to the air on foreign visits, notably to the Balkans and the former Soviet south in early 1993. Though such trips were generally well co-ordinated with the Foreign Ministry, they nevertheless caused some uncertainties in the regions concerned, and provided some black propaganda value for Greece and Serbia.²⁹ Ultimately, they simply drew attention to Özal's political frustrations as he languished outside the mainstream of Turkish party politics.

²⁷ Alan Makovsky, *Turkey's Presidential Jitters* (WINER, Policywatch #451, 10 April 2000), p. 3.

²⁸ C.H. Dodd, 'Kenan Evren as President: From Conflict to Compromise' in Heper and Evin (eds), *Politics in the Third Turkish Republic*, op. cit., p. 177.

²⁹ For example, the Yugoslav Federal Foreign Ministry accused Özal just after his Balkan tour of wanting to create an Islamic state in Bosnia.

For Demirel, who has never claimed any special expertise or even interest in foreign policy, the temptation of foreign affairs did not at first prove strong, especially as long as the domain was being well looked after by a coherent government and state bureaucracy. From 1994 onwards Demirel began to assume more of a profile in foreign affairs, with the areas of Central Asia, Azerbaijan and the CIS and then the Balkans and parts of the Arab World forming his personal priorities in descending order. Under the Refaiyol government in particular, the first two of these areas were to become his favoured foreign affairs niches. According to one of Demirel's Foreign Ministry advisers, Demirel favoured Central Asia in particular because it was popular at home, he believed that he could make an impact, and no clear institutional framework existed for the development of such ties.³⁰ He could have added that consistently since 1993 no one else among Turkey's political leadership had considered it to be a priority area. Consequently, Demirel was filling a diplomatic vacuum. What is beyond doubt is that the leaders of these newly independent states warmed to his interest. In Demirel, the newly repackaged patriarchs of the former Soviet southern republics had at last found a kindred spirit.

In August 2000 the former constitutional court judge Ahmet Necdet Sezer was elected to succeed Demirel as president. During his first year in office he proved to be an aloof figure who, in keeping with his philosophy of a pared down presidency, was less active and interventionist than his predecessor, though he soon carved out a reputation for integrity and rectitude. However, foreign affairs appeared not to be a priority for Sezer, who stuck closely to the formalities of office. In April 2001 he paid a rare presidential overseas visit, somewhat surprisingly selecting the Netherlands as his first European destination.

THE FOREIGN MINISTRY

The bureaucracy has historically been the object of awe and deference in Turkey.³¹ Within the Ottoman bureaucracy, the Foreign

³⁰ Interview, Ankara, 8 February 1995.

³¹ For a discussion of the bureaucracy in the Ottoman and Turkish states see Meinin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey* (Eothen Press, Beverley, 1985).

Ministry was an elite within an elite. This ethos of the Foreign Ministry as a centre of bureaucratic excellence persists in contemporary Turkey. It persists in the way that the diplomatic corps regards itself, and it persists in the deference accorded to the Foreign Ministry by ordinary Turks. After all, the ministry is famous for having the most difficult entry exam of all Turkey's ministries. In short, high status and prestige are firmly associated with recruitment to the Foreign Ministry.

The standing of the Foreign Ministry in Turkish society is further buttressed by the social and normative homogeneity of the service. New recruits tend to be drawn from a relatively small number of schools and universities, notably Ankara University and more recently Bosphorus University and Middle East Technical University, thereby reinforcing the exclusive networks at the top of Turkish society. Furthermore, new recruits tend to subscribe to the prevailing values of the Kemalist regime. It is, for instance, unusual to say the least to find a member of the Foreign Ministry staff who is a publicly observant Muslim, let alone one who either socially or ideologically stands outside the mainstream.

That is not to say that the Foreign Ministry is either a static or monolithic body. It is subject to change, as is the case with any other part of Turkish society. For instance, the ministry is no longer the only obvious professional choice for bright, well born and well educated young men; increasingly in the 1990s a well paid career in private business was likely to prove to be more attractive. It may be the case that the ministry is not quite as homogeneous as it has been in the past, with, most noticeably, a larger number of women now being recruited to diplomatic ranks. Such changes are, however, on the whole slow and incremental.

If the Foreign Ministry is regarded as part of the social elite in Turkey, it is also regarded as firmly part of the bureaucratic elite. Though only consisting of some 400 professional diplomats, the Foreign Ministry is razor sharp in its handling of certain portfolios and its performance in certain capitals and at certain forums. On issues relating to the EU, NATO, Cyprus, the WEU and the UN, and relations with the main European powers, the US and Russia, the ministry attains a level of activity well in excess of the often quite modest size of the genuinely diplomatic staff in its relevant

missions would tend to suggest. In contrast, postings to other geographical areas and multilateral institutions, notably for example to the Middle East, have tended to be under-valued or even scorned by those in the ministry. Even Turkey's relations with the states of the former Soviet south have often suffered because of the nominal diplomatic presence in these countries and the preference of top flight diplomats for Western postings. If in developing countries in general the collective memory of government tends to be short, this is not the case in Turkey as far as foreign affairs is concerned. In Turkey the collective memory tends to be much, sometimes very much longer because of the relative institutionalisation of the Foreign Ministry.

The continuity and enduring professionalism of the Foreign Ministry have been aided by its immunisation from political patronage. The 1970s, 1980s and 1990s have seen political parties increasingly quick to exploit bureaucratic appointments as a way of rewarding supporters. Even important and sensitive ministries, such as interior, education and finance, have been subject to repeated attempts at political colonisation by successive parties. Özal was a notable offender against the principle of a professional and impartial civil service during his two ANAP administrations.

If it had increasingly become the norm to make large-scale political appointments to the bureaucracy, the ambassadorial appointments would have been regarded as a particular prize to be shared out to senior party supporters, as is the case in much of the US foreign service. In Turkey, this has not happened, as the Foreign Ministry is protected from such practice by law. Frustrated at not getting his own way, this helps to explain why Özal came to take quite such a personal interest in foreign policy. He was suspicious that some of his bolder initiatives might not be implemented rapidly and in full if left to the Foreign Ministry. Therefore, he tended to break the mould of existing policies through often extravagant personal actions, in order to rob the Foreign Ministry of its ability to moderate such initiative through a process of bureaucratic incrementalism.

Özal, however, often went further than this. He had a penchant for personalised diplomacy, because of the opportunities which it afforded him in terms of high level connections and publicity. This, in turn, helped to bolster his reputation as a statesman of international

repute at home, which further buttressed his larger than life image and hence, it was hoped at least, would translate into the valuable resource of votes come polling day. His personal telephone diplomacy with President Bush during and immediately after the Gulf crisis is legendary. Moreover, Özal often gloried in an ostentatious style, perhaps mischievously because he knew that it would offend and affront the diplomats in the MFA. The Turkish Foreign Ministry felt frustration at Özal's substantive initiatives undertaken without reference to them, such as his decision in 1992 to meet with the Iraqi Kurdish opposition groups. The ministry also had to repair bilateral relations damaged when Özal let off steam. His public aside during the 1990–1 Gulf crisis that the Germans were 'too fat and too rich to fight' was a case in point.³²

The legally enforced professionalism of the Foreign Ministry has, nevertheless, not altogether preserved it from becoming tainted with domestic party politics. The appointment of the ministry undersecretary and of key ambassadorial and Ankara-based positions has certainly become both more political and more subject to public controversy since 1994 than was the case in the past. The most notorious example of this was the appointment of a successor to Özdem Sanberk as under secretary. Premier Çiller began by insisting that her former adviser Volkan Vural, then serving as ambassador to Moscow, should receive the appointment. Though his appointment was assumed to be cut and dried in the first half of 1994, and Vural had actually been recalled home, the newly installed foreign minister, Mümtaz Soysal, came to resist the promotion as his working relationship with Çiller deteriorated. Çiller, in turn, blocked ministerial promotions and postings in a bid to get her own way.³³ The name of Ambassador Candemir Önhon, then in London, subsequently came into the frame, apparently at the instigation of Soysal. When Çiller failed to get her way, and Vural's desire for the position waned, she turned her patronage to Onur Öymen, eventually winning out only after the departure from office of the quixotic Soysal. A further negative side effect of this unseemly and extended wrangle was that Foreign Ministry appointments were held up pending

³² *Turkish Daily News*, 8 September 1992.

³³ *Turkish Daily News*, 29 November 1994.

the resolution of the stand-off.³⁴ Diplomats were, in the words of one anonymous commentator, 'packed up with nowhere to go'.³⁵ When the new foreign minister, Murat Karayalçın, came to approve the new postings, there were some 35 diplomats caught up in the human logjam.

This unseemly in fighting helped to weaken Turkey by politicising senior appointments, and creating a sense of grievance and demoralisation within the Foreign Ministry cadre. The damage to Turkey was not confined just to the period surrounding the appointment of the new Under Secretary, nor was it confined to the domestic domain. So closely associated with Çiller was Öymen that on becoming prime minister in February 1996 Mesut Yılmaz orchestrated a campaign to weaken and eventually oust the Under Secretary. In order to accomplish this, sensitive information on the Graeco-Turkish dispute over the island of Imia/Kardak was leaked to the press, in turn helping to damage Turkey's international position.³⁶ Again personal and party loyalties had eclipsed the wider interests of the country.

THE SECURITY ESTABLISHMENT

The military has always had a close relationship with politics in the modern state of Turkey.³⁷ For example, six out of Turkey's first seven heads of state were retired senior military officers, spanning the period from 1923 to 1989, the exception being the period of 1950–60 and the presidency of Celal Bayar, who was eventually ousted in the first military coup. The military also played a decisive role in the establishment of the state in the early 1920s. The centrality of the military as a feature of Turkish political life has its precursor in Ottoman times, when the military was central to the wielding and

³⁴ The situation in London was particularly embarrassing. Ambassador Önhon, Sanberk's predecessor in London, took his leave of Queen Elizabeth II in January, but then had to remain in post until the senior promotions were eventually resolved in late April. It was said that Önhon was obliged to stay away from major events for fear that he would meet the Queen and create a crisis of protocol.

³⁵ *Turkish Probe* No. 128, 19 May 1995.

³⁶ *Turkish Daily News*, 22 April 1996.

³⁷ For an up-to-date commentary on the Turkish military see Gareth Jenkins, *Context and Circumstance: The Turkish Military and Politics* (IISS Adelphi Paper 337, London, 2001).

retention of political power. For the first twenty-seven years of the republic the impact of the military was considerable, though usually rendered through informal contacts. Since the 1960 coup, the armed forces have played a more overt role in Turkish politics. In the last four decades the military has intervened four times to bring about governmental change: twice directly in 1960 and 1980; twice indirectly in 1971 and 1997.

Since 1961 the military has given constitutional propriety to its impact on government and policymaking through the development of the National Security Council.³⁸ The NSC is formally an advisory body which is chaired by the president of the republic and was, until the constitutional amendments package of October 2001 prescribed a civilian majority, made up equally of civilian and military figures.³⁹ Its brief is to submit its views on 'the formulation, establishment and implementation of the national security policy of the State'.⁴⁰ In practice, its impact on government is much more important than is stated. In spite of its split membership, it exists as a conduit through which the military can give their views on a range of policy matters, and the secretary-general of the organisation, though he does not enjoy voting rights, is a senior officer. It may dispense 'advice', but in practice it is virtually unheard of for cabinets and parliaments publicly to question its views, and it is a proud claim made by the NSC secretariat that there are no examples of recommendations in the realm of foreign policy that have remained unimplemented. The NSC is also responsible for coordinating the drafting and then the approval of the National Security Policy Document, a highly confidential document which establishes priorities

³⁸ According to the secretary-general of the NSC, the body was first established in 1933 on a statutory basis, it being the 1961 Constitution which gave the institution the full weight of constitutional authority. Interview with Gen. Cunnur Asparuk, NSC headquarters, Ankara, 7 December 1999.

³⁹ In addition to the president, the NSC has traditionally consisted of the prime minister, the defence, foreign and interior ministers; the chief of staff, and the heads of the four branches of the military, the fourth being the Gendarmerie. Though there is no legal provision for it, it has become a convention of the current administration to have the leaders of all three coalition parties take part in NSC meetings. Ecevit, as prime minister, with full rights, his two partners with speaking but not voting rights. In addition, other relevant figures can be invited to attend NSC meetings. *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Article 118 of The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, p. 60.

in national security threats and elaborates guidelines for responses. The November 1997 document made prominent mention of relations with Greece, Syria, the EU and the Turkic republics. It was updated in January 1999 and then again in May 2001, when the preoccupations were more internal.

In keeping with its concern with internal and external manifestations of security, the Turkish military keeps a close track of a number of issues in both domains. It does this, for instance, through the existence of the Turkish General Staff think tank, which was created in 1983 and extended in scope and authority by General Çevik Bir in 1996. It also does so through the 43 working groups within the military, the first of which was created in 1981 and whose number has been growing rapidly since 1996. Of this number there are said to be seven dealing with Greece alone, together with further groups dealing with single countries, like the United States, Britain, Iran, Iraq, Israel and Armenia, or regions such as the Balkans, the Turkic states and the EU or key issues like water, terrorism and fundamentalist movements.

Most obviously, the armed forces have dominated policy towards the Kurdish insurgency in the south-east since 1993, and hence have also had a major impact on Turkey's relations with Iraq, Syria and the EU. Since 1997 the military has spearheaded attempts to bring about educational reform as a way of undermining the attractiveness of the religious secondary schools. The General Staff has also established its own unit, the West Working Group (*Batı Çalışma Grubu*), to monitor anti-secular activities.

In the area of foreign policy the military has tended to be less overtly involved, especially during the first two periods under review. This has, however, changed quite markedly under the phase of weak, disorganised leadership. It was, for example, the army which drove forward the emerging strategic relationship with Israel, the pivotal moment of which was the conclusion of the secret training agreement in February 1996. In autumn 1998 it was the military that created the conditions under which Syria felt obliged to expel the leader of the Kurdish insurgency organisation, the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan.

The military is not, however, the only component of the security establishment that has a bearing on foreign relations. The MIT combines responsibility for both counter-intelligence and foreign

espionage. It has widely been suspected that other security agencies in Turkey, notably the Gendarmerie, have their own covert operations. The Susurluk affair, a chance road crash which resulted in the revelation of links between organised crime, politicians and state functionaries in the security services, confirmed this to be the case, revealing the extent to which such agencies operate independently and even in competition with one another.

While most of the activity of such agencies takes place within Turkey, and hence is strictly speaking beyond the scope of this work, involvement does also exist beyond the borders of the country. That activity appeared to intensify from the 1970s onwards; it also became increasingly confused with the underworld of Turkish mafia gangs and the activities of the ultra-nationalists, notably those with a background in the Idealist Hearths (*ilklü ocakları*). As with much of the state's covert activity, the actions of its opponents, many of them involving the use of violence and assassination, provided a strong motivation for its expansion.

Much of this activity was developed in response to the PKK insurgency and the growing political activities of the Kurdish nationalist movement in Europe. Predating even that, the activities of the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) appear to have provided the initial impetus for the use of underworld gangs by the state. A raid on an ASALA base in the Begaa Valley in 1984, for instance, was carried out by an *ilklüci* gang led by Alaatin Çakıcı, who went on to become a notorious mafia boss and who has recently been sentenced to an extended jail term in Turkey. The assassination of the ASALA leader Agop Agopyan in April 1988 is also alleged to have had an *ilklüci* connection.

The activities of the Turkish security and intelligence services and their associates have not been confined to the Armenian and Kurdish issues. One clear example of the foreign operations of such agencies or rogue elements within them came with the aborted coup attempt against the Azerbaijani president, Heydar Aliyev, between 15–17 March 1995, led by the former deputy interior minister Rusev Cevadov. Following its failure, in part due to a tip-off from President Demirel, President Aliyev immediately accused official Turkish circles of involvement. Shortly afterwards, on a visit to Baku, prime minister Tansu Çiller apologised for the involvement of 'an uncontrollable

Turkish right-wing group' in the coup attempt.⁴¹ It was subsequently revealed that a Turk serving in his country's embassy in Baku had been spirited out of Azerbaijan immediately after the coup attempt.

Secondary players

PARLIAMENT

The overwhelming focus of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), Turkey's unicameral parliament, is with domestic political issues. Foreign affairs, consequently, are of a much more limited and spasmodic focus. Moreover, in Turkish politics the political parties are the dominant mode of political organisation, and, in turn, the leader dominates the party. In what Kamran Inan has called the 'political feudalism' in Turkish party politics,⁴² parties are highly centralised and subject to the tyrannical control of the leader. The *quid pro quo* for MPs and party members is the access to power and resources which the leader's patronage can deliver provided he or she and their party are successful either electorally or during the process of coalition building. Of course, there are limitations to party discipline, and the frequent and sometimes mass defections which have punctuated the life of parliaments in the 1990s are testimony to this. However, these defections tend to be the product of individual calculation, born often of frustration at the limited advancement under the prevailing party leader; where such defections are more ideologically inspired, they rarely relate to the domain of foreign affairs.

At the political margins, the TGNA is involved in foreign affairs. There is, for example, a Foreign Affairs Commission of the Turkish parliament, which discusses new bills relating to foreign affairs, receives visiting dignitaries and undertakes a variety of trips abroad. The committee has tended to have only a very limited impact on the field in the past, and does not enjoy much of a public or media profile in Turkey. It also seems to be seen as a political backwater by the country's leading actors. In 1997, for example, Murat Karayalçın somewhat reluctantly accepted the offer of the chair of the commission, the suspicion being that this was an attempt by the Cum-

⁴¹ *Turkish Probe*, 14 April 1995.

⁴² Interview with the author, Ankara, 26 September 1996.

hürriyet Halk Partisi (CHP) party leadership to distract him from the continuing internal party struggles.⁴³ The TGNA has also occasionally taken an interest in specific issues in foreign affairs, and established an ad hoc Bosnia Committee during the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Parliament's utility lies less in terms of the activities of its individual members and more in terms of the forum for debate and policy which it offers, usually to the benefit of the government. From June 1992 onwards the Turkish government transferred responsibility for the extension of the six-monthly mandate for Operation Provide Comfort 2 (OPC 2) to the TGNA. OPC 2, since January 1997 re-titled Operation Northern Watch, was the mechanism by which a handful of coalition powers enforced the no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel in northern Iraq from June 1991 onwards. The policy had met sustained criticism from the opposition, while many officials too had misgivings about it. Offloading responsibility for the six-monthly renewal of the operation's mandate onto parliament was an efficient and effective way of taking the pressure off a new coalition government.

An area of policy debate which permitted the opposition a forum for criticism was policy towards Israel. Islamist parliamentarians in Turkey have periodically criticised different aspects of the opening up. For example, Abdullâh Gül roundly criticised Tansu Çiller's visit to Israel in November 1994, at a time when virtually all of the Occupied Territories was still under Israeli control. He also attacked the idea to sell water from the Manavgat river to Israel, and objected to the principle that Turkey help facilitate openings for Israel to the 'Turkic' republics.⁴⁴ RP deputies would frequently attack the pro-Israel leanings of such adversaries as Coşkun Kurca during parliamentary debate.

THE MEDIA

There has been an explosion in the amount and range of private media activity in Turkey since 1989. This has been particularly marked in the field of broadcasting. In 1989 the state still enjoyed an effective monopoly in this field. Suddenly, private television and radio stations mushroomed. The state's first inclination was to try to

⁴³ Interview with Murat Karayalın, Berlin, 8 June 1998.

⁴⁴ TRT TV 3 November in BBC/SWB/EE, 5 November 1994.

suppress such activity. However, this simply resulted in private channels moving off-shore and beaming their transmissions into Turkey, notably from Germany. The state consequently and reluctantly relented, and Turkey today enjoys a broad pluralism in terms of television and radio broadcasting, as indeed it does in magazine and book publishing, though the daily Turkish press is increasingly tainted by the direct influence of media barons and the leverage exerted over them by government.

This general atmosphere of pluralism does have its shortcomings. Ankara continues to prevent any television station from broadcasting in the Kurdish languages from its territory. Kurdish television can be received in Turkey in the form of Med TV, and its successor Medya-TV, the Kurdish channel which broadcasts from Brussels under license from London, and which is widely regarded as being close to the PKK. The Turkish authorities were profoundly unhappy with this state of affairs, though its response softened with the advent of Medya-TV, but are powerless directly to prevent the transmissions. State efforts have concentrated on preventing its Kurdish population from receiving the station, and discouraging foreign countries from assisting Med TV, with some success.⁴⁵ Such persuasion and pressure eventually helped to bring about Med TV being banned from the airwaves by the London-based Independent Television Commission. The fact that Med TV continued to broadcast for so long became a major issue in bilateral relations between Turkey and both Belgium and Britain.⁴⁶ Indeed, in an otherwise cordial relationship, Med TV was the single most serious problem in relations between Ankara and London over much of the 1990s.

The media are also important in terms of external relations with respect to the so-called 'Turkic republics' of the former Soviet south. Ankara established the Avrasya television network specifically to broadcast to these emerging states. The aim was to solidify a

⁴⁵ The Turkish government was successful in pressuring French and Portuguese companies into cancelling contracts on pain of economic sanctions, while a satellite transmission contract with the Polish PTT was apparently cancelled following the intervention of Ankara. See *Turkish Daily News* 5 July 1996.

⁴⁶ For example, during the visit to Turkey of the British foreign secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, in September 1995, the issue of Med TV was the biggest source of Turkish unhappiness with Britain.

broad set of political and economic relationships through cultural, and in this case, informational ties. The station aimed to acquaint the Turkic peoples of these societies with Turkish culture, politics and society, and to try to develop a common set of values and identity. As with the attempt to forge economic and political relations, the Avrasya channel has been a disappointment. The regimes in power in these new republics were wary of ceding their monopoly over information, even to an apparently friendly state like Turkey. Political obstruction therefore helped to compound technical problems, especially in the difficulties surrounding the terrestrial rebroadcasting of transmissions. This problem was further exacerbated by under-resourcing and some indifferent programming, which meant that there was generally little demand from the countries concerned to be able to receive the broadcasts.

Inside Turkey the media have already had a big impact. A range of perspectives, from the Islamist and nationalist right through the secular right to social democracy and the soft left, are nightly on offer in the form of various discussion programmes. A wider selection of radio stations, many of them locally oriented and uncensored, offer an even broader set of ideological perspectives. Such networks and stations do include foreign affairs in their coverage, though this tends to be much less prominent in comparison with domestic issues.

Arguably of greater importance in terms of the foreign affairs debate is the press, and particularly the many foreign affairs columnists who write for the main national circulation newspapers. The Turkish press includes a much larger number of regular columnists than the British or North American press. These columnists reflect a range of expertise, being drawn from among academic experts and retired diplomats, as well as professional journalists. A handful of the best known columnists are particularly influential. In turn, they are cultivated by a range of different actors, both domestic and foreign, in the hope of influencing the wider debate in Turkey.

It is, of course, extremely difficult to measure the impact of such columnists. Much research needs to be done on the sources of information on which articles are based and their influence on the primary foreign policy actors. Suffice it to say that the esteem in which foreign affairs columnists like Sami Köhen of *Milliyet*, described by

one senior Turkish diplomat as the 'dean of columnists',⁴⁷ are held can be glimpsed at in the prominence which they enjoy in their newspapers, and the attempts which are made to cultivate them.

Cyprus One of the best illustrations of the potential influence of columnists was witnessed over the Cyprus issue in the second half of 1992. The UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, was in the midst of a major diplomatic push, based on a 'set of ideas' and a 'non-map'. President Özal was keen to see the Cyprus problem solved, because of the negative impact which he felt it was having on Turkey's international standing. Foreign minister Çetin was co-operating with the US-backed UN diplomacy. The leader of the Turkish Cypriots, Rauf Denktaş, was manoeuvring for all he was worth to try to dissipate the international pressure. Prime minister Demirel was trying to avoid being drawn on the issue, mindful of its emotive force in Turkey.

With Denktaş on the defensive, he was assisted by the Turkish Cypriot lobby in Turkey, and notably Mümtaz Soysal. Soysal was then a high profile and respected academic, who was also a long standing adviser to Denktaş; he also happened to be a columnist on one of the three Turkish mass circulation dailies *Hürriyet*. He vigorously attacked the international effort to corner Denktaş, and stoutly defended the uncooperative attitude of his ally. Soysal employed a range of populist arguments to raise the alarm among Turks as to the nature of the solution being offered in northern Cyprus. For example, he wrote at the height of the diplomatic efforts that the Turkish Cypriots were being told: 'Either cede lots of land or agree to have lots of Greek Cypriots settled amongst you'.⁴⁸ He also sought to rally Turkish public opinion through historical references which played on Turkish insecurities and latent xenophobia. He wrote that if Turkey gave in on Cyprus, other demands, the West's 'bagful of Orient problems', such as the Aegean, the Armenian issue and the Kurdish issue, would follow; the 'spirit of Sévres', he wrote, 'can come back to haunt us and the turning point is the Cyprus issue'.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Unattributable interview with author, 8 December 1999.

⁴⁸ *Hürriyet*, 24 July 1992.

⁴⁹ *Hürriyet*, 27 November 1992.

While a range of other leading columnists, such as Hasan Cemal, Mehmet Ali Birand and Sedat Ergin, were writing regularly on the Cyprus issue at that time, it was Cengiz Çandar who emerged as the chief adversary of Soysal. Known to be close to Özal, and presumed to be on occasions a mouthpiece for the president, Çandar vigorously defended the desirability of a successful outcome to the UN initiative from the perspective of Turkish national interest. He asserted the need to deal with the political reality of the dominant position of Greek Cyprus in the international community.⁵⁰ He also attacked those who were trying to move the goalposts just when the UN was close to a workable accord on the basis of a bi-zonal, bi-communal, federal settlement, the principles for which Turkey had long been arguing. Furthermore, he criticised Denktas for trying to manoeuvre in such a way as to suggest that it was Turkey that was making territorial concessions on the island.⁵¹

With Turks always likely to be more swayed by the florid arguments advanced by Soysal, Demirel eventually withdrew his lukewarm support from the UN initiative. Denktas, with the help of a handful of Turkish columnists and the sympathetic leanings of public opinion, had succeeded in manipulating Turkish domestic politics to his benefit internationally.

INTEREST GROUPS

The 1980s, and the development of a new economic strategy, saw the emergence of business groups with a direct interest in foreign economic policy. Before 1980, the business community was overwhelmingly inward focused and dependent on the state. This cosy and safe relationship began to break down with the introduction by Turgut Özal of an export-oriented economic strategy. Increasingly, companies began to look for new opportunities abroad and to become more self-reliant and entrepreneurial. While hidden barriers to imports and the rentierist practices of the Turkish economy have perpetuated some of these old practices, much of the Turkish private sector is now dynamic and innovative.

Turgut Özal's contribution did not remain purely at the level of the reform of the business environment. As we have seen, he was

determined that Turkish businessmen should actively profit from the new relationships which he was establishing and nurturing abroad; hence Özal's practice of taking businessmen with him on his trips abroad, together with officials and journalists. His aim was to orient business culture towards investment, trade and contracting abroad, and to ensure that business benefited from the goodwill and introductions which came in the wake of such visits. Soon leading businessmen competed with one another to be included, eager to improve their access to the prime minister. Özal cleverly exploited this understandable trait to imbue the business sector with the new values of export-oriented trade. Those leading businessmen who were alert to the opportunities being presented in turn rallied to defend Özal in the early days, when, as the generals' economic guru, he was vulnerable to outside criticism. They drew the attention of European critics, concerned that Özal's authority had been acquired under a military regime, to the positive substance of his policies.⁵²

By the late 1980s parts of the Turkish private business sector had begun to establish extensive commercial ties abroad. In turn, such businessmen began to develop tangible interests in foreign policy. An increasingly central business interest was that political problems with neighbours, which have in Turkey's case always been considerable, should not be allowed to interfere with commercial operations. More specifically, this perspective took the view that economic sanctions should not be taken in pursuit of political objectives. It was, for instance, of some note that a Turkish business leader, İshak Alaton of the Alarko corporation, attempted to use his business contacts with American-based Armenians to try to promote economic interaction between Turkey and Armenia.⁵³ A second example was seen during the Chechen conflict in the Russian Federation. Turkish businessmen lobbied behind the scenes to persuade Ankara not to introduce economic sanctions against Russia for its crackdown on the Chechens for fear that this would damage growing commercial

⁵² Interview with leading Turkish businessman, Berlin, 8 June 1998.

⁵³ For example, he arranged a meeting between Hrant Hovhannian, whom he accompanied, and Turkish foreign minister Hikmet Çetin, at which Hovhannian argued for the opening of a border gate for trade to enable Armenia to benefit from transit traffic via the Black Sea port of Trabzon. See *Sabah*, cited in Turkish Press Review, 19 February 1992.

⁵⁰ *Sabah*, 22 July 1992.

⁵¹ *Sabah*, 4 August 1992.

interaction with the federation. A third significant response from the business community came in reply to the Luxembourg summit of December 1997. Though disappointed by the final communiqué, mainstream businessmen generally exerted a sobering influence, cautioning against an over-reaction against the EU and pointing out that the outcome of the summit was not entirely unexpected. In so doing, Turkish businessmen helped to temper premier Yılmaz's somewhat intemperate reaction to the Luxembourg summit.⁵⁴

Of course, it would be misleading to view the business community in Turkey in the 1990s as being monolithic. Foreign policy interests divide the business community along sectoral, ideological and organisational lines. When Ankara was seriously negotiating the detail of the Customs Union (CU) with the EU, the textile and related sectors were enthusiastic advocates because of their relative strength at home and within the European market. Other sectors, such as the automobile industry, were much more sceptical, fearing the impact of a flood of cheaper, better quality, named vehicles. It was no coincidence that it was the Koç company, with its major interest in the co-production of cars with Fiat, that was one of the more ambivalent of Turkish companies towards the CU. Small and medium-sized Turkish industries also feared the consequences of the dismantling of *de facto* protectionist barriers against the EU.

To some extent, ideological interests overlapped with sectoral interests. Hence it was the Association of Independent Industrialists and Businessmen (*Müstakil Sanayiciler ve İşadamları*) or Müsiad, a business organisation representing mostly small and medium sized commercial interests whose owners are self-consciously practicing Muslims,⁵⁵ that was the businessmen's organisation most sceptical about the CU. Ideologically, Müsiad had none of the instinctive attachment to closer integration with the EU that Tüsiad, the employers' organisation representing the country's big firms, and mainly Kemalist in nature, has always appeared to display. The fact that Müsiad's constituency feared for its material interests in a CU gave focus to the organisation's demands for a renegotiation of the terms

and conditions of the CU. Müsiad's membership and activity have been accelerating rapidly since its establishment in 1990. In the case of CU renegotiation, however, Müsiad failed to persuade the Refahiyol government actively to seek such a renegotiation during its 12-month tenure of office.

Müsiad may well have been marginally more successful in persuading the Refahiyol coalition to expand existing and build new economic ties with the Muslim world, although this was a priority already shared by the RP when it came to power. Certainly, members of the Müsiad secretariat were happy to join Erbakan's delegation on both his Asia and his Africa tours in the autumn of 1996. In turn Müsiad, though active in many countries, appears to have made a special effort to follow-up on the Erbakan visits to Malaysia and Iran.

ETHNIC PRESSURE GROUPS

Turkey is in great part a state made up of immigrants. Successive waves of migrants have arrived over hundreds of years. More important, Turkey has received new waves of migrants, principally from the Balkans and the Caucasus, since the 1870s. Many of these people were Balkan Turks and Muslims who fled to the Anatolian core of the state as the Ottoman Empire spasmodically but inexorably shrank in south-east Europe. With natural growth, these peoples now represent formidable proportions of the total Turkish population.⁵⁶ Other waves of migrants have arrived more recently, culminating with the arrival of Bulgarian Turks fleeing the Zhivkov assimilationist policies of the mid- to late-1980s. Furthermore, Turkey has always provided a home for Turkic dissidents and émigré politicians, from Chinese Uighurs to Uzbekistani dissidents to Afghan political figures.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ For instance, with intermarriage inflating the numbers, by 1994 it was estimated that up to 10 mn Turks had ethnic roots in the Caucasus.

⁵⁷ Around 20,000–25,000 east Turkistanis were estimated to have emigrated to Turkey in the early 1950s. Uzbekistani dissident Muhammad Salih spent some time in Turkey in 1994 and 1995, before leaving against a backdrop of increasing dissatisfaction from Tashkent. It was to Turkey that the Afghan warlord Rashid Dostum (also an ethnic Uzbek) fled after his temporary ousting from the north of the country in May 1997.

⁵⁴ *Turkish Daily News*, 16 December 1997.

⁵⁵ For background on Müsiad see Oxford Analytica Daily Brief on 'TURKEY: Islamic Business', 3 April 1996; Ayşe Buğra, *Islam in Economic Organisations* (TESEV/Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Istanbul, 1999).

Many of the more self-conscious activists belonging to such waves have kept their political focus by establishing émigré political and support networks. The great majority of such arrivals have, however, been content to assimilate on the basis of the majority ideology of the state. They have taken seriously Atatürk's nationalist dictum to set aside their parochial identities and give a voluntary allegiance to the notion of being Turks: the ethnicity, identity and geographical origins of the people in the past thereby becoming unimportant. The emergence of a collective curiosity by Turks about their origins since the end of the 1980s has partly reversed this process, though only with Turkey's Kurdish communities has it taken on a strident ethno-nationalist form. For most of the rest of the population all that has taken place is a kind of cultural curiosity.

Where the voyage of self discovery has been more pronounced has been among groups of Turks who hail from areas that have encountered political change and even conflict since the end of the Cold War. These groups have been active in the assistance of new refugee arrivals; examples include the Yugoslav Emigrants Social Assistance and Solidarity Association in the case of the Bosnian refugees who began to come to Turkey in April 1992, and the Caucasus Chechen Solidarity Committee (CCSC) assisting wounded Chechen refugees in January 1995. They have also been particularly active in the provision of humanitarian aid to conflict areas, such as the CCSC which received Turkish government authorisation to launch a nation-wide appeal for Chechnya.

These and other groups have also taken on an overtly political role. Much of this effort has concentrated on advocacy work, especially within Turkish domestic politics. The Rumelian Turks Association illustrated the access which such groups could achieve in April 1992, when it met Çetin and İnönü to urge Turkey to take 'stronger measures' in support of the Bosnian Muslims.⁵⁸ In April 1993 the Azerbaijan Cultural Association urged Ankara to take 'more effective and lasting measures' in the face of the growing conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.⁵⁹ Such groups have also played a behind-the-scenes role in ensuring a widespread and high-level hearing for visiting politicians from the relevant conflict area. An excellent

⁵⁸ *Turkish Daily News*, 27 April 1992.

⁵⁹ BBC/SWB/EE, 5 April 1993.

example of this was the role played by the CCSC in the visit of the Chechen former Speaker of the Duma, Ruslan Khasbulatov in May 1995.⁶⁰ Such organisations have also sought to influence the position of Turkish political parties.⁶¹ Some groups are suspected of playing an even more active role on behalf of their fellow strugglers, from supplying personnel and materials for military training,⁶² through facilitating the despatch of volunteer fighters, especially in Azerbaijan, to even becoming involved in arms smuggling.

On the whole, such groups have met with only very limited success. They have tended to succeed in publicising their causes, notably in parliament and among the media. But they have usually failed to make any inroads into Turkish policy, especially when confronted by a consistent policy line backed by diplomats and military men. The nature of such groupings has often been that they would try to persuade the Turkish state to intervene more directly on behalf of their fellow strugglers. For the institutions of the state, which are historically and strategically highly attuned to the potential risks of such adventures abroad, the inclination was always to resist such pressures. In the end, the ability of such groupings to muster real, sustained political pressure has invariably been extremely limited. A combination of organisational fragmentation and personal rivalry, together with an instinctive first loyalty to the Turkish state and its interests on the part of the broader communities, rather than to their fellow strugglers, goes a long way towards explaining the relative ineffectiveness of these ethnic lobbies.

PUBLIC OPINION

The state tradition in Turkey is that the people exist to serve the state rather than the state existing to serve the people. This is a tradition that has prevailed for hundreds of years, and which characterised the Ottoman Empire. Only since 1950 has the Turkish state

⁶⁰ *Turkish Daily News*, 25 May 1995.

⁶¹ For example, a representative of the Bosnian Solidarity Association addressed members of the Welfare Party in Ankara. See Yesim Arat, *Political Islam in Turkey and Women's Organizations* (TESEV/Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Istanbul, 1999), p. 27.

⁶² In early 1994 there were estimated to be around 160 former Turkish officers in Azerbaijan in a training capacity.

adopted the formalities of democracy on a sustained basis. Beneath the structures and processes of democracy, the assimilation of democratic culture has been much more limited. Clientelist ties have typified the relationship between at least some of the political parties and their supporters, especially in the more rural, tribal and underdeveloped parts of the country.⁶³

These attributes of Turkey's political culture tend to make policymaking in general and foreign policymaking in particular a predominantly elite-oriented affair. Public opinion polls of varying degrees of reliability indicate that Turks do have views on external affairs and attitudes towards other states. Nevertheless, these views rarely appear to have an impact on either policymakers or the policymaking process. It is as if the elite does not expect to take such views into account, while the mass of the population does not expect its views to be taken on board. Even on emotive issues such as Bosnia, it appeared as if the foreign policy elite in Turkey did not come under any sustained, mass pressure to adopt a more assertive approach. Attempts to convene mass rallies on such popular issues have tended not to attract demonstrators beyond the ranks of the highly politicised. Perhaps the best example of this was the February 1993 rally for Bosnia in Taksim Square in Istanbul. Under the slogan of 'Turks to Bosnia', the rally only succeeded in attracting 20,000 people, mostly drawn from those with ultra-nationalist and Islamist backgrounds.⁶⁴

There is, however, one major exception in terms of public opinion. That exception is Cyprus, the one foreign policy issue which is able to have a major impact on domestic politics, as has already been shown in the war of the columnists in 1992. Even the issue of Cyprus is difficult to evaluate or quantify in terms of its impact on public opinion. Senior Turkish diplomats claim that Cyprus is the one issue on which a national consensus exists across Turkish society. The decision in the late 1990s by the board of the Turkish Economic and

⁶³ For an impassioned statement on the undemocratic practices which often flow from Turkey's democratic forms see Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, 'Turkish Politics: Central and local governance in Turkey', unpublished paper, p. 14, presented to a conference on 'Turkey and the European Union: A Question of Image or Governance?' at Bosphorus University, Istanbul, 3 December 1999.

⁶⁴ *Turkish Probe*, 16 February 1993.

Social Studies Foundation (TESEV),⁶⁵ arguably Turkey's leading think tank, that while it was prepared to undertake research into the extremely delicate question of Islam in Turkey it was unwilling to initiate a debate on Cyprus, points to the emotive nature of the issue.

While most commentators and analysts would probably agree that public opinion has not been very important with respect to foreign affairs in the past, there is an increasing assumption that public sentiment is of growing importance in the 1990s. This may, to a degree, be the case. Turkey is clearly a country in transition, economically, socially and in terms of state-society relations. Far fewer Turks are now dependent on the state for a living; civil society is growing, especially in the major cities; some of the Islamist mayors have, since their successes in the local elections of March 1994, largely repeated in April 1999, begun to inculcate a new value of service in the provision of local government; the media are pluralist, with a broad range of views and ideas laid out nightly by the country's main television channels. From the perspective of a Western liberal tradition, all of these trends are to be applauded and welcomed. Extrapolating normatively one might expect such developments to result in the eventual production of a population of citizens, roughly akin to a Western European model, and ergo with a greater impact on foreign affairs. Leaving aside the questionable assumptions of unilinear development implicit in such a view, one suspects that the reason why these developments have made such an impact is not their direct influence on public policy *per se* but their almost complete absence until relatively recently.

For most of the last two decades the process of Turkish foreign policymaking has been somewhat chaotic. The personal intervention of Turgut Özal, together with his strong character, resulted in a period of strategic vision and bold initiatives between 1986 and 1991. This individual approach helped Turkey to benefit from an international system increasingly in transition, although Turkey was vulnerable when Özal miscalculated. Since 1994, the chaos of Turkish

⁶⁵ The acronym is derived from the Turkish name of the foundation, *Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı*. The think tank was located at Bosphorus University, but is now at Sabancı University.

foreign policymaking has been much more disastrous in its effects. As a result of party political weakness and the self-serving nature of politicians, foreign policy has been characterised by political discontinuity and confusion; often the state of Turkey has lost out as politicians have focused on their own short term, tactical calculations. An increasingly demoralised bureaucracy has found it hard to mitigate the problems at the political core. Amidst such confusion, the military has re-emerged as an assertive foreign policy actor.

Sandwiched between these two periods was the 1991–4 era of a collegiate, bureaucratic approach to foreign policy, where a small number of professional diplomats worked in close association with the leading politicians of the day. Together, they produced careful, solid, unspectacular foreign policy, firmly located within a Western, multilateral context of international legality. Turkey and indeed its friends were fortunate that this era corresponded with the worst of the conflict and instability of the post-Cold War period.

It is fashionable among the students of civil society to look for new, non-state players in the area of public policy. Thus, there has been a growing interest in such players as the media, public opinion and the ethnic lobbies in Turkey. To be sure, these do exist and have sporadically attempted to exert some effect upon the foreign policy-making process. Perhaps in the long term they may indeed emerge as being of primary importance. In reality, however, the leading players in the domain of Turkish foreign policy in the 1990s look much the same as those which have dominated in the past. The Foreign Ministry remains an elite institution which attracts well trained minds, and which expects to preside certainly over the day to day execution of policy. In the late 1990s, the military has emerged more publicly than at any time for the last decade and a half as the most important institution, at least in charting the strategic direction of foreign policy. Of increasingly fleeting importance in all of this are the politicians, acting through the institutions of the government and the presidency. With short attention spans, low policy horizons and a preoccupation with the vicissitudes of domestic party politics, they appear increasingly unable to give Turkey the clear and democratic lead which its foreign policymaking requires.

Part II

DOMESTIC MOTIVATORS OF TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

3

HISTORY AND FOREIGN POLICY

As in so many recently created states, history in Turkey is so much more than simply the disparate, collected views of the past. History helps to legitimise the creation and existence of the state; it helps ideologically to orientate the state; it tells a story which embodies the myths, ideas and values which give meaning to political life within the state. Consequently, it is of little surprise that historical orthodoxies are so prized, and are often treated as being inviolable. Indeed, Atatürk himself said: 'Writing history is as important as making history'.¹ As befits a society where education is often crude, and rote learning the dominant pedagogical tool, the orthodoxies of the elite in Turkey have provided some, though not all, of the foundation stones of the world view of the masses.

The need to invoke, interpret and, where necessary, invent the past was extremely important during the first decades of independence, when projects as fundamental as state, nation and ideology building were in full flood.² The Ottoman Empire was eschewed as a discredited rival, and the ancient civilisations of the Hittites and Sumerians were plundered as an alternative source of greatness and inspiration. The importance of such undertakings could be seen in

¹ Quote following the preface of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *The Speech*, translated and abridged by Önder Renkilyıldırım (Metro, Istanbul, 1985), p. 4.

² For a discussion of the importance of the interpretation of history in the new republic's secular Kemalist nationalism, see Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic* (Hurst, London, 1997), esp. pp. 101–14.